

**Wednesday, May 3, 2023 – 5:30 – 7:30pm**  
**MEETING NOTES**

**SWAC MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

Carol Jones, Chair Robin Barr, Vice Chair Adam Diamond, Secretary Amy Maron, Secretary	Fred Kranz Ellen Ryan Mark Symborski (M-NCPPC rep, non-voting)
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**SWAC MEMBERS ABSENT:** Troy Cavell, Heidi Lovett, Chaz Miller

**DEP STAFF IN ATTENDANCE:**

David Frank, RRMD Waste Reduction and Recycling Section  
Lisa Shine, RRMD Executive Administrative Aide  
Anthony Skinner, DEP Chief, Business Operations  
Richard Hands, Senior Finance Specialist, DEP Business Operations

**MEMBERS OF PUBLIC:** Neil Seldman

**Previous Meeting Minutes:** SWAC was unable to approve the minutes because a quorum was not present.

**Featured Presentation: *Understanding Montgomery County’s solid waste services charge***

**Speakers:** Anthony Skinner and Rick Hands

Montgomery County Office of Business Operations (OBO) provides budget and financial management for DEP. Chapter 48 of the County code governs the County’s solid waste management system and establishes the **Solid Waste Enterprise Fund**, which OBO manages.

The Fund has three component funds:

- **Disposal Fund** – accounts for all disposal programs and operations, facility maintenance and waste processing
- **Collection Fund** – accounts for refuse collection activities, and
- **Leaf Vacuum Fund** – accounts for leaf collection and processing (maintained by DOT Highway Services).

The funds operate on a fee for service basis, where revenues must equal costs. They are maintained in a prudent manner wherein rates are calculated to provide financial stability, budget flexibility, and to mitigate financial risk.

The solid waste service charges to be collected from households and businesses via real property account billing, potentially include 5 components (depending upon which services they receive):

- **Base systems benefit charge:** is paid by all entities in the County, and covers the costs of system administration, historical debt service, waste reduction, and “stand-by” disposal capacity.
- **Incremental systems benefit charge:** is paid by entities based on sector-specific services they receive for recycling collection, processing recycling, and recycling outreach, which varies across

SF, MF, and non-residential entities; SF households in incorporated municipalities in the County do not pay it (they pay their municipality).

- **Refuse collection charge:** is paid by SF households in the unincorporated areas of the County (subdistrict A), and covers the once weekly refuse collection service by County contractors.
- **Disposal charge:** covers the cost of disposal of the waste at the transfer station and is paid as a service charge via the tax bill for SF households in the unincorporated areas of the County receiving County services (subdistrict A) and is paid at the transfer station by haulers providing services to other households (all in incorporated municipalities, or MF and commercial in unincorporated areas).
- **Leaf vacuuming charge:** is paid by homeowners who receive leaf vacuuming service in the Leaf Vacuuming district.

(Note: Properties with 7 or more units are considered multi-family (MF); others are considered single family (SF).)

Non-residential base and incremental fees are based on expected waste generation categories (low though high)—for example, law firms are charged less per 2,000 square feet than a restaurant. Businesses can appeal their category placement.

RRMD did a market study and found that, at \$70/ton, the County is still the least expensive option to tip trash compared to other places in the region.

**RRMD Updates:** David Frank

- A revised draft of the contractor SERA's report on implementing Save as You Throw is due this week.
- A first draft of the report to look at organics processing options in the county is due in August; a final draft is due Sept 30.
- Waste composition study is complete.
- RFEOI for managing waste without incineration is due May 6. It is like a pre-RFP. Have to submit in this stage to be part of RFP.
- Mattress recycling is up and running at transfer station. A vendor will collect and refurbish or recycle mattresses, depending upon quality.
- In the new [Maryland Solid Waste Management and Diversion Report](#), Montgomery County has slipped to the third highest recycling since because use of ash as landfill daily cover is not counted now as recycling.
- Food scraps pilot has 3 areas running, and is recruiting for a 4<sup>th</sup>. No contamination issues (perhaps because it's voluntary). If it becomes mandatory, may get garbage in with the compost. Note: The State of CA has mandatory source separation of organics for everyone.
- The Silver Spring pilot has more households and lower food waste per household than Potomac or Bethesda.
- Bill Broglie is the new Acting Deputy Director of DEP.

**SWAC Updates:**

**Presentation by Amy Maron: Proposal for a county ban on plastic bags, along with increased fee for paper bags.**

The County’s 10 YR Solid Waste Management Plan includes a proposed plastic bag ban in the Enhanced Plan of Action for Reducing Solid Waste Generation and Maximizing Recycling (Chapter 5).

Definition of reusable bag: bag with stitched handle designed for reuse, made of cloth or other washable fabric. “Compostable” bags would be banned—many are not BPI certified. And even if they are, they are going into the trash.

Why should Montgomery County ban plastic carryout bags from retail stores and charge 10 cents for paper bags?

- Plastic bags are made using fracked gas, which contributes to climate impacts.
- Less than 5% of single-use plastic carryout bags are recycled; Environmental impacts of disposal of single use plastic bags: litter, burned in incinerator.
- MoCo 5-cent tax on disposable bags has halved share of shoppers taking plastic carryout bags, so MoCo is doing better than PG County, which doesn’t have plastic bag tax, but recently share of shoppers using plastic bags has increased after initially going down after bag tax put in place in 2012.
- Need disincentive for paper bags.
- Don’t want a minimum thickness standard because it isn’t a disincentive to use less plastic.
- No exemptions for SNAP or WIC—provide free reusable bags at events.
- The 10-cent fee on paper bags would provide Division of Water Quality with continued funding for litter reduction. Stores keep a part of the fee (to cover cost of paper bags)

A bill was drafted in 2022 by DEP with Sierra Club support but was shelved due to lack of sponsor.

Proposal for SWAC action to consider: Can SWAC support bill? Zero Waste MoCo would develop a stakeholder approach and look for sponsors. Need county to do a bill.

Water Quality staff in DEP have been taking lead on bag ban.

Carol will contact Water Quality Advisory Committee chair to see if Amy can present to them.

**RRMD Budget:**

Briefing for T & E work session refers to SWAC letter-mentions recommendation for additional staff and zero waste educational campaign.

Meeting Adjourned at 7:39

**ACRONYMS**

C&D	Construction and Demolition	DEP	Department of Environmental Protection
CC	County Council	EPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
CE	County Executive	FTE	Full Time Employee
CNG	Compressed Natural Gas	FY	Fiscal Year
CPI	Consumer Price Index	MDE	Maryland Department of the Environment
DAFIG	Dickerson Area Facilities Implementation Group	MoCo	Montgomery County
		MES	Maryland Environmental Services

MF Multi-family  
MRF Materials Recovery Facility  
MML Maryland Municipal League  
MCPS Montgomery County Public Schools  
OLO Office of Legislative Oversight  
PAYT Pay-As-You-Throw  
RRF Resource Recovery Facility  
RRMD Recycling & Resource Management Division  
SA Service Area for County collection  
SAYT Save-As-You-Throw  
SCA Sugarloaf Community Association  
SF Single family  
SWAC Solid Waste Advisory Committee  
SWMP Solid Waste Management Plan  
T&E Transportation and Environment Committee,  
County Council  
TPD Tons per Day  
ZWTF Zero Waste Task Force

